

Serial No. 09/722,991
Amendment dated April 2, 2004
Reply to Office action of November 4, 2003

Remarks

Claims 1-21 were filed in this case. Claims 9-17 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Claims 2, 6, 18, 19 and 20 are cancelled by this amendment. Claim 1 is amended. Claims 22, 24, 25, 27, and 28 are newly presented. The current claim amendments are not occasioned by the prior art, rather they are made to more particularly point out and distinctly claim Applicant's invention. Amended claim 1 and new claim 22 include limitations of previously objected dependent claims that have been rewritten in independent form that include all of the limitations of the base claim and the other intervening claims.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-6, 18 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,389,698. Applicant respectfully traverses this refusal.

The Examiner indicated that claims 19-20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Given this allowable subject matter, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations found in now cancelled claim 19. Similarly, newly presented claim 22 includes the limitations of base claim 1 and the limitations found in now cancelled claim 20.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 7-8, 18, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,389,698. Applicant respectfully traverses this refusal.

Given this allowable subject matter as indicated by the Examiner pertaining to claims 19-20 along with the amendment to claim 1 to including the limitations found in now cancelled claim 19 and newly presented claim 22 includes the limitations of base claim 1 and the limitations found in now cancelled claim 20, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

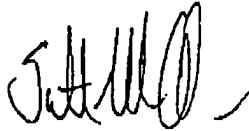
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Based upon the foregoing, it is believed that the present invention as now claimed clearly distinguishes from the prior art, and favorable action hereon is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
Hahn Loeser + Parks, LLP



Scott M. Oldham
Registration No. 32,712

SMO/pam
Twin Oaks Estate
1225 West Market Street
Akron, OH 44313-7188
(330) 864-5550

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